



Module 2

MULTIGRADE TEACHING

Classroom Organisation and Management



THE COMMONWEALTH *of* LEARNING

General Education Modules
for Upper Primary and Junior Secondary School Teachers
of Science, Technology and Mathematics by Distance
in the Southern African Development Community (SADC)

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GENERAL EDUCATION MODULES

This module is one of a series prepared under the auspices of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and The Commonwealth of Learning as part of the Science, Technology and Mathematics Programme (STAMP 2000+). These General Education modules enable teachers to enhance their professional skills through distance and open learning. Many individuals and groups have been involved in writing and producing these modules. We trust that they will benefit not only the teachers who use them, but also, ultimately, their students and the communities and nations in which they live.

The eighteen General Education modules are as follows:

- Module 1: *Multigrade Teaching: Introduction to Multigrade Teaching*
- Module 2: *Multigrade Teaching: Classroom Organisation and Management*
- Module 3: *The Reading Process*
- Module 4: *Developing Reading Skills*
- Module 5: *Special Educational Needs: An Introduction to Teaching Traumatised Children*
- Module 6: *Special Educational Needs: A Practical Guide to Teaching Traumatised Children*
- Module 7: *Education Management Development: Part A*
- Module 8: *Education Management Development: Part B*
- Module 9: *Child Development*
- Module 10: *Concepts of Learning*
- Module 11: *An Introduction to Concepts in Language and Communication*
- Module 12: *Language and Communication: Language in Use*
- Module 13: *Curriculum Theory, Design and Assessment*
- Module 14: *Curriculum Practice*
- Module 15: *A Theoretical Framework on Innovations in Education*
- Module 16: *Effects of Social Changes on Education*
- Module 17: *Comparative Education: Introduction to Key Concepts in Comparative Education*
- Module 18: *Comparative Education: Themes and Trends in Comparative Education in SADC Countries*

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF LEARNING



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Module 2

MULTIGRADE TEACHING

Classroom Organisation and Management

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MULTIGRADE TEACHING

Classroom Organisation and Management

This is one of a series of modules in the General Education courses developed by Ministries of Education in the SADC region in cooperation with The Commonwealth of Learning.

In the previous module, you were introduced to the concept of multigrade teaching and how it differs from monograde teaching. This module will further discuss some ways and means to help you understand and effectively implement multigrade teaching in your school. The module focuses on organisation and management as it affects multigrade teaching.

Remember that learning is at the heart of teaching. Your job as a teacher is to create an environment in which learning is promoted and can take place.

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LEARNING TIPS

You will find the following tips helpful as you study this module.

- **Set aside some time each day to work on this module.** If possible, study at the same time and in the same place so you are comfortable with your study surroundings. Learning at a distance requires discipline and motivation.
- **Go through the module unit by unit.**
- **Note any words you do not understand.** Look them up in a dictionary or other reference source or discuss them with your colleagues.
- **Underline or highlight important passages.** Make summary notes in the margins of long passages. Writing will help you to remember the material. You may also choose to make diagrams that illustrate how different ideas are related or list the steps in a procedure or technique.
- As you work through this module, **keep in mind your learners and their educational needs** as well as your instructional goals and your subject matter. How will you apply what you are learning?
- Read the assignment instructions carefully. Then, **do all the self-assessment activities** before proceeding to the Suggested Answers section.
- **As you undertake each activity, relate it to the practice of teaching** and analyse how it will help you to enhance the teaching-learning situation. Always ask yourself how you could use this material.
- **Apply some of the suggested techniques to your teaching.** All suggestions may not be appropriate for your situation, but how will you know unless you try them? Keep a record of what techniques work and an explanation of why some techniques appeared to fail. What does not work now may work later with different students.
- It may be difficult, but try to **meet occasionally with other teachers** to discuss the content and application of suggestions provided in this module.
- If you experience difficulty in understanding some aspect of the module, do not despair! You are meant to be challenged. **Do not give up!** Just remember that your goal is to be the best teacher that you can be. Think of what you would tell a student who was experiencing difficulty in your classroom. Then, apply the same advice to yourself.

ICONS

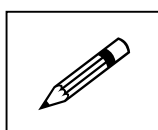
Throughout each module, you will find the following icons or graphic symbols that alert you to a change in activity within the module. Only the icons that are required are used in each module.



Text or Reading Material: provides information about the topics that are covered in a module. The subject matter for each SADC module is organised into units.



Introductory Activity: requires you to focus on the content that will be discussed in a unit.



Self-Assessment: enables you to check your understanding of what you have read and, in some cases, to apply the information presented in the unit to new situations.



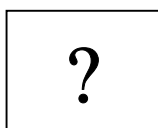
Practice Activity: encourages you to review and apply what you have learned before taking a unit test.



Reflection: asks you to relate what you have learned to your work as a teacher or education officer in your community.



Summary: highlights or provides an overview of the most important points covered in a unit.



Unit Test: concludes each unit.



Suggested Answers: allow you to evaluate your learning by providing sample answers to assessments, activities and the unit test.

MODULE RATIONALE

Multigrade teaching in the SADC region, just like in other parts of the developing and developed world, has been in existence since the introduction of the formal mass schooling system. The reasons for the existence of the phenomenon are many and are explored in the first units of the two modules on multigrade teaching.

Though multigrade classes have been with us for a long time, formal education systems have not paid sufficient attention to the challenges posed by the multigrade environment. For example,

- The majority of teachers currently teaching multigrade classes have had no special training for teaching these classes.
- There is little attention paid to this issue in government education policies.
- There is little or no in-service support for multigrade teachers.
- Teacher education institutions have tended to ignore multigrade teaching in their teacher development programmes.

Most teachers in multigrade classes have thus been left to fend for themselves. There is a growing awareness, however, that multigrade classrooms have a unique educational context. A deliberate and conscious attempt must be made to assist teachers in developing the skills and knowledge necessary to provide a quality education to children in multigrade classrooms. Curriculum and programme modifications are necessary to accommodate the needs of learners in multigrade situations.

The two modules on multigrade teaching represent an attempt by educators within the SADC region to achieve a number of objectives, namely:

- To focus attention on the plight of teachers working in isolated, rural and difficult environments where they must deal with the challenge of multigrade classrooms on a daily basis.
- To recognise and honour these teachers for their tremendous dedication, the sacrifices they have made and the wisdom they have gained as they laboured with their challenges while receiving minimal government or institutional support.
- To acknowledge the need to implement development programmes and support systems that will address the knowledge, skills and management needs of teachers working in multigrade schools.
- To encourage teacher training institutions to include multigrade teaching as an important topic in their curricula.
- To offer some strategies that teachers can consider and apply to their situations.

We hope that the effort presented in these modules will go some way in meeting the above objectives, as well as in supporting similar endeavours that will raise the level of attention paid to multigrade schools.

UNIT 1: Teaching Strategies



Introduction

Teachers use many strategies in their day-to-day teaching. Sometimes they are fully aware of the strategies they are employing, sometimes not.

Teachers need to know a variety of teaching strategies so that they can use them to address particular subjects and situations. Some strategies will work well with some students; others will not.

This unit will expose you to a range of teaching strategies that you can use with your multigrade class.

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Describe various teaching strategies that could be used in the multigrade classroom.
2. List and explain factors to be considered when selecting teaching strategies.
3. Implement some of the teaching strategies.

Content

This unit will cover the following topics:

- definition and description of teaching strategies
- types of teaching strategies
- factors to be considered when selecting teaching strategies.

What Are Teaching Strategies?

Teaching is a process of guiding and enabling an individual to learn new ideas and skills and to develop new values and attitudes. The main goal of teachers is to help students learn. Learners are different; therefore, they learn in different ways. That is why teachers should use a variety of methods to cater to different learners. These methods are referred to as teaching strategies.



Self-Assessment 1

In order to teach a multigrade class effectively, what strategies do you usually use?

Suggested answers to this activity may be found at the end of this unit.



Types of Teaching Strategies

Teaching strategies play an important role in an effective multigrade class. The following are some of the teaching strategies that could be implemented by a multigrade teacher.

Teaching Strategies

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. group work | 6. project approach |
| 2. demonstration | 7. centre of interest approach |
| 3. observation | 8. peer teaching |
| 4. drama | 9. debate |
| 5. role-play | 10. quiz |

Four of the teaching strategies explained below are group work, peer teaching, drama and project approach.

Group Work

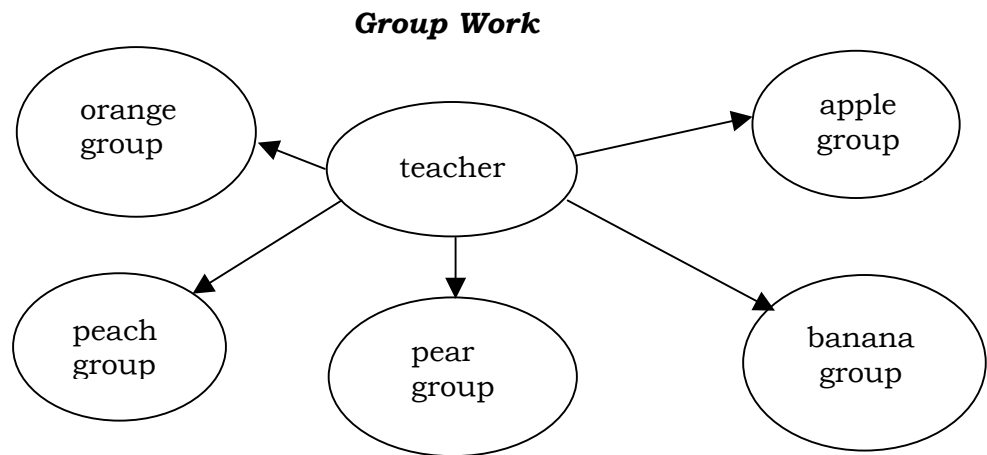
In this approach, a teacher organises learners to work in smaller groups according to their abilities, interests and ages. See Figure 1.

But how should groups be formed? When should you use them? What are the different ways to use them?

Groups are formed in a variety of ways, depending on the type of lesson you want to teach. Below are examples of how learners can be grouped.

- **Mixed ability groups:** Slower and fast learners are placed in one group.
- **Same ability groups:** All learners progress at more or less the same pace.
- **Social groups:** Learners with the same or mixed backgrounds are grouped together.
- **Gender groups:** The boys and girls are separated.
- **Interest groups:** All learners show interest in the same activity or topic.
- **Peer groups:** Friends who like to work together are placed in the same group.
- **Random groups:** Learners are chosen in no particular order.
- **Pair grouping:** Two learners work together.

Group work is a good way to organise your class. It is learner-centred and can be used all the time. It allows learners to sit together in an organised manner as shown below.

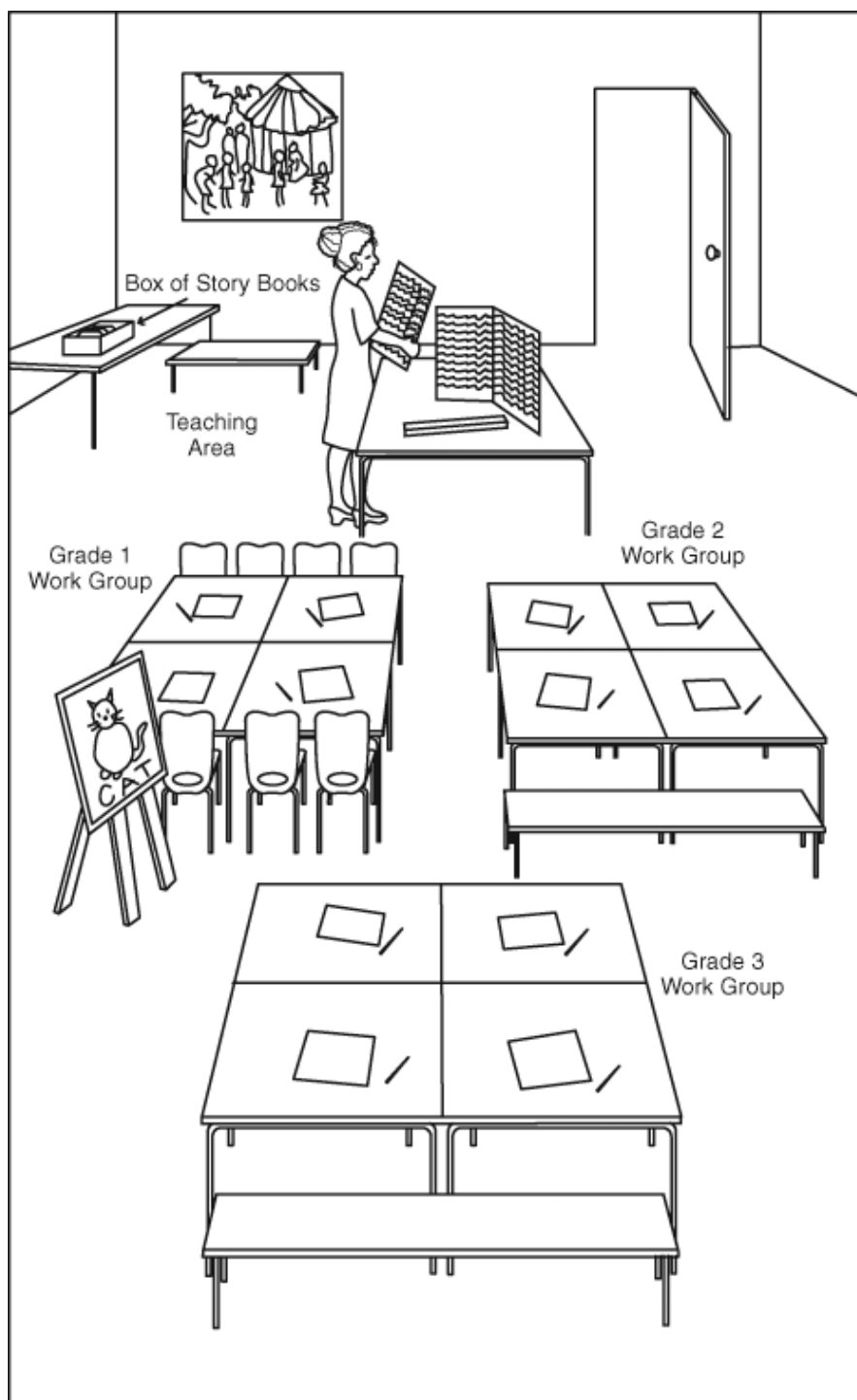


Give learners the opportunity to name their own groups. This elicits pride and a sense of ownership.

Since you can arrange groups in a variety of ways, you can make up groups that suit your needs and those of your learners. Change your groups from time to time. Do not use the same grouping all the time. Give your learners the opportunity to interact with other learners.

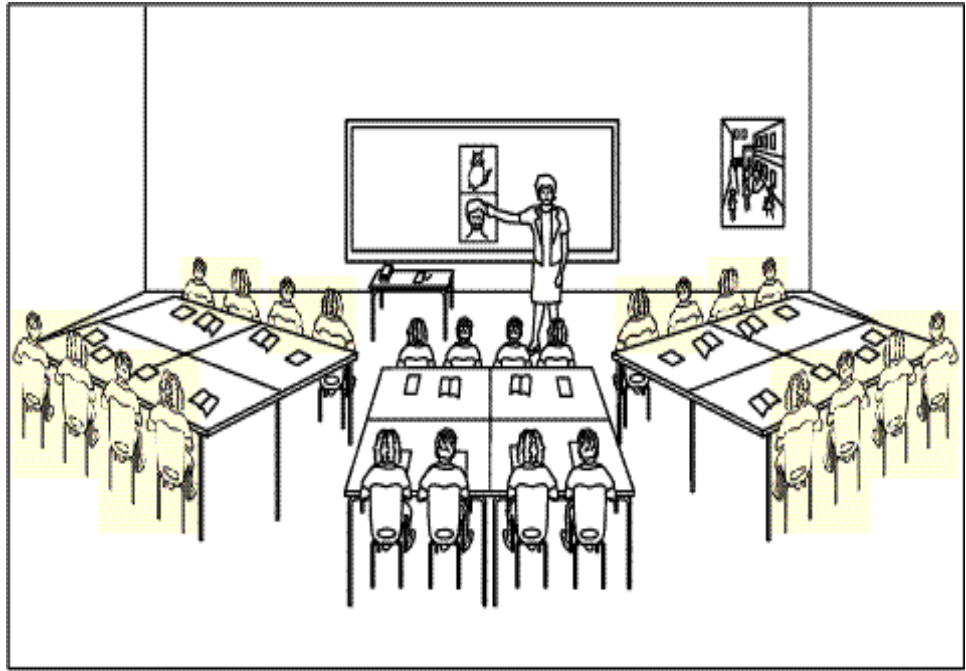
When you set up your classroom for group work, you may place the tables in small groups as illustrated in Figure 1, or you can arrange the tables so that all students sit facing the teacher as in Figure 2.

Figure 1



Source: *Breakthrough to Setswana for Botswana* (Teacher's Manual).

Figure 2



Source: *Breakthrough to Setswana for Botswana* (Teacher's Manual).

In order to avoid idleness or boredom, the teacher must prepare as many appropriate activities as possible. You can also assign duties to various group members. Certain skills can be enhanced through group activities. For example:

- Group leader - could develop leadership skills.
- Scribe - could develop writing skills.
- Timekeeper - could become more aware of and develop a respect for time.

The above responsibilities should be rotated amongst the learners so that all of them get an opportunity to do different chores and to develop new skills.

Advantages and Disadvantages of Group Work

Group work has both advantages and disadvantages for students.

Advantages

- Learners can share skills and work cooperatively.
- Resources can be rotated among a number of groups.
- Learners can develop self-confidence and independent learning skills.
- Group work can increase participation and involvement.

- Group work allows for individual differences so the learner learns more effectively.
- The teacher can attend to learners who need more attention.

Disadvantages

- Some learners ridicule others in a group because of their disabilities.
- Some learners tend to dominate the group.
- Shy learners may be ignored or be disadvantaged.

Observe groups carefully so that you can recognize and remediate these types of problems as quickly as possible.

Peer Teaching

This is an approach in which students serve as teachers or coaches to other students in the same or different grade levels.

The older or more advanced children can often teach other students. Peer teaching is frequently effective because learners use their own language patterns during their interactions. Peer teaching also develops the peer leader's self-confidence. The peer leader should understand his or her roles clearly. The peer leader should be well organised and prepared. Peer teaching can also be used to develop practical skills related to farm work, road safety, sports and first aid. Peer teaching is useful in managing situations because the peer teacher can assist by working with individual students in groups while the teacher is with another class. The following guidelines will help you to ensure that peer teaching works effectively.

The teacher should:

- prepare peer leaders in advance by explaining their roles and their tasks clearly,
- help peer leaders to gather materials needed for the activities to be conducted, and
- evaluate the peer leaders. Note what actually took place and what needs to be done next.

The peer leader should:

- understand the task,
- develop positive skills for dealing with others, and
- report to the teacher the successes or weaknesses of peers.



Introductory Activity

Write a short story with at least four characters. Ask learners to act out the story with your guidance. List the skills acquired by the learners.

Possible answers to the above activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Drama

This is an approach that requires learners to act out stories or themes referring to a specific topic. Dramas help learners to acquire concepts, skills, attitudes and values.

On their own, learners cannot articulate a situation in order to translate it into a play or drama. You will therefore be required to ensure that your learners understand the concepts, attitudes and skills that may be required to dramatise effectively.

Various aspects of dramas may help students develop the skills and attitudes outlined in the table below.

Concepts	Skills	Attitudes
Main story ideas	Listening	Taking turns
Sequence of story	Speaking and articulating language clearly	Respecting and accommodating the opinions of others
Character traits	Gestures	Sharing
Social issues	Being patient and tolerant	Being able to work in a group situation

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat, Caribbean Community Secretariat and Commonwealth of Learning. (1998: 60). *Multigrade Teaching Programme. Module 4: Teaching Strategies for Multigrade Education*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

Project Approach

This method allows learners to devise ways and means for exploring a subject in depth. It involves investigating or solving a problem individually or in groups.

The starting point of a project can be triggered by a problem, the syllabus, the learner or an incident. There are many more starting points you could use in your multigrade class.

Read the following case study carefully and consider how you would guide your learners in starting up a project of their choice.

Need for a Library Shelf

You have been moved into a new classroom. Your learners' reading books are all over the place. You've asked your learners what could be done to resolve this problem. They've suggested that they will help build a bookshelf and organise a library corner. *Ask your learners to plan and organise a reading corner for the classroom.*

The following steps might be helpful in planning for the project.

Planning Stage

- Let the learners brainstorm the topic to generate ideas.
- Prioritise the ideas. In this case, organise them into a chronological sequence. What must be completed before each step can take place?
- Ensure that the project is very clear to all your learners.

Preparations

- Identify the tools, equipment and resources that will be required.
- Group the learners according to specific tasks they will be required to perform in the project.
- Assign a group leader.

Performance

- Once everyone is ready to work on the task, let them start.
- When the need arises, you should act as a coordinator or expert.

Evaluation

- Once the project is completed, hold a session with all your learners. Ask them to identify the successes that were achieved or the problems that arose.
- Always reward successes and encourage learners whose performance might have been weak.

As indicated earlier, projects arise out of identified needs. It is rewarding when the learners identify their own projects and

you help to facilitate the realisation of the projects. Learners have potential. Nurture this potential.

Read the case study below.

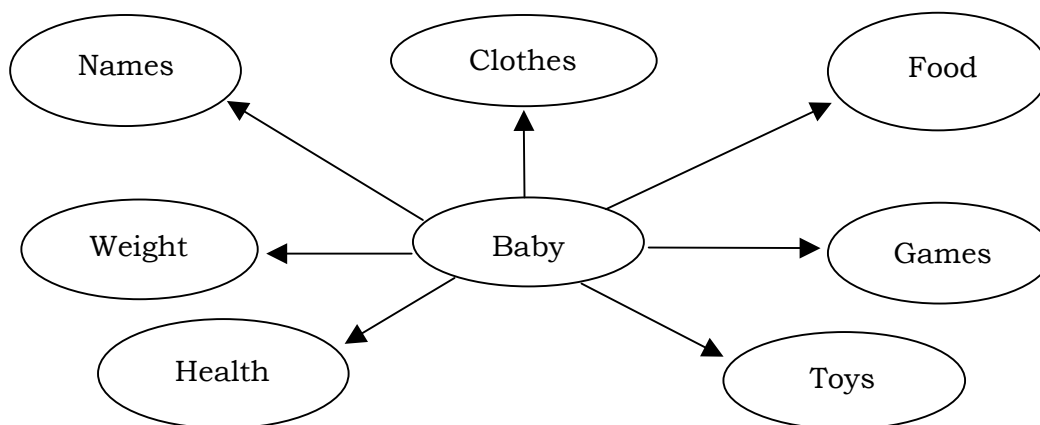
The New Baby

Your class is organised in such a way that the timetable will allow learners to report on some topic of interest in their communities. Today, it is Maria's turn. Maria tells the class about the new baby in her family. The class shows interest in the story and decides to discuss this further in order to develop a project.

Group the class into three interest groups. Allow each group to choose a specific aspect about babies that they would like to research.

Below is an example of how a simple topic can be organised into a project across different grades at different levels of difficulty and with different focuses.

The New Baby



Within your multigrade class, there is great potential for the learners to lead, enrich and create learning conditions that will benefit both you and them. It is true that it takes time to prepare for a multigrade class. But if the potential within a multigrade class is used, chances are that you will find it not only useful, but also rewarding.

Here is another example of a project triggered by an incident or event.

You are now in the second term of the academic year. The topic you are studying this week is transportation. On the radio, television and print media, the main news item has been about a terrible traffic accident. Over seventy people are feared dead in the head-on collision between two passenger buses. This has triggered your class to focus on road safety. How would you

assist your learners to develop a project on road safety? Remember the steps we identified earlier. They might be helpful here. Also consider the suggestions in the next paragraph.

Below are a few steps that you and your learners could use to develop the project.

Planning Stage. Build the confidence of the learners by orienting them to the project. Through a variety of activities, identify topics and possible responsibilities.

Preparations. Prepare the learners for the types of activities they may conduct while working on the project. This preparation develops basic learning skills such as research, observation, recording, socialisation and creativity.

Performance. Students must learn how to organise the information and prepare for the presentation of their findings.

Evaluation. The teacher and the learners must evaluate the project, provide feedback and keep records of their activities.

Source: Adapted from J. Dewey, *Guidelines for Project Teaching: Botswana*. Unpublished.



Practice Activity

Now that we have discussed various ways that a project can be started, we would like you to focus on how these same skills can be used with your colleagues. The case study below will help you consolidate your knowledge. You will apply what you have learned directly to a concern that you may face.

Read the next short case study carefully and respond to the instructions provided. Remember that every situation or environment may require a different approach or strategy.

Helping the New Teacher

Mrs Matare has just been transferred to your school. She is an inexperienced teacher who will be teaching a multigrade class for the first time. Explain how you as an experienced multigrade teacher would help to prepare the new teacher to deliver classroom instruction effectively.

Suggested answers for this practice activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Factors to Consider When Selecting Teaching Strategies

Before you select an appropriate teaching strategy, you should always take the following factors into consideration:

- the number of learners in each grade
- the different abilities of the learners
- the cultural backgrounds and languages of your learners
- the ages of the learners
- socio-economic factors that may affect your learners, the community and yourself
- available resources, including teaching aids, personnel (teachers and community) and learning space
- the season of the year.



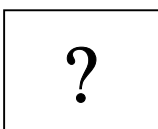
Summary

In this unit, we have focussed on teaching strategies. Every multigrade teacher must select various teaching strategies that will help students learn. Strategies such as group work, peer teaching, drama and project approach cater to a variety of learners who may have different backgrounds and abilities. You may elect to teach one group at a time, while other groups are working on their own. Remember always to consider factors that could affect the learning process. These factors are not limited to the characteristics of the learners. They may also include the availability of resources, the socio-economic status of the community and the season of the year.



Reflection

Try to remember and visualise what you have learned in this unit. How do you feel? Can you now handle a multigrade class using the teaching strategies covered in this unit?



Unit Test

1. Describe various teaching strategies you could use in a multigrade class.
2. List difficulties you might experience in implementing these strategies and suggest ways of overcoming them.
3. Identify factors that should be considered when selecting teaching strategies for a multigrade class.

Possible answers to the test questions are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment

In addition to the ones you have been using, you might find the following strategies helpful:

- group work
- peer teaching
- project approach
- drama
- centre of interest
- games
- pair learning
- quiz
- demonstration
- debate
- role play

Introductory Activity

Your story may help learners to listen better, to perform psychomotor skills, to speak clearly and to be creative.

Practice Activity

You could assist the new teacher in a number of ways, including the two outlined below:

1. You could invite the new teacher to observe your class and have her focus on the following:
 - different ways that you have grouped your learners,
 - the role of the group leaders,
 - how students interact, and
 - how you prepare students for a lesson, provide guidance and provide effective feedback.
2. You could ask the new teacher to join you in the preparation of your lessons. You could discuss the different types of strategies to be applied in a multigrade class and factors that should be considered when selecting teaching strategies.

Unit Test

1. Below is a description of four teaching strategies that were covered in this unit.

Group work is a strategy in which learners work cooperatively in a group to complete a task. Groups can be formed in a variety of ways:

- mixed ability groups comprising slow and fast learners,
- same ability groups in which all learners generally proceed at the same pace, and
- gender groups which separate boys and girls.

Peer teaching is a strategy whereby learners serve as teachers to other students within and across grade levels. The teacher should ensure that:

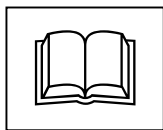
- the peer leader understands his or her role,
- the peer leader can demonstrate positive interpersonal skills, and
- the successes and weaknesses of the peer teaching activity are reviewed and discussed.

Drama is a teaching strategy that involves learners acting out stories. Drama is very useful in providing weaker students with opportunities to succeed in acquiring concepts, skills, attitudes and values.

Project approach is a strategy that allows students to design methods for exploring a subject in depth. It involves investigating or solving a problem individually or in groups.

2. You could have mentioned any of the following difficulties in implementing the above teaching strategies:
 - Shy learners might be ignored. You should rotate group roles to ensure that all learners get an opportunity to develop different skills.
 - Learners with physical disabilities could be ridiculed. Teach your learners to be tolerant and sensitive to people who are different from them.
 - Some students may dominate certain activities. Speak with them individually and emphasize the need for everyone to take part in the activity.
 - Some students may not want to participate in an activity. Find out why and, if possible, provide them with a task or activity that interests them.
3. Some of the factors that you should consider when selecting teaching strategies are:
 - the topic you will be teaching,
 - the type of learners in your class,
 - the amount of time you may have available for the activity,
 - the available resources, including materials, equipment and people,
 - the support you have from the community, and
 - the interest or preferences learners have towards a specific strategy.

UNIT 2: Timetabling and Scheduling



Introduction

In the previous unit, you were introduced to different teaching strategies and how they could be used. This unit will cover timetabling and scheduling. Teachers experience many problems with timetabling and scheduling when they teach two or more grades under one roof. Therefore, multigrade teachers need to know the factors they should consider when developing a timetable or a schedule.

Objectives

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Define and prepare a timetable for a multigrade class.
2. State reasons why a timetable is needed.
3. List the advantages and disadvantages of a timetable.
4. Name at least five factors to be considered when designing a timetable.
5. Identify and compare different timetables.
6. Explain what scheduling is.

Content

This unit will cover the following topics:

- a definition of a timetable
- reasons why a timetable is needed
- advantages and disadvantages of timetabling
- factors to consider when designing a timetable
- types of timetables
- scheduling.

What Is a Timetable

A timetable is a means by which educational resources are shared in a school system by both the teacher and the learners to provide educational opportunities and alternatives for the learners.

A timetable shows how the periods of each school day should be spent. The more effectively your resources are used, the better the learning. It should be remembered that what is on the timetable affects the entire school and should therefore reflect the educational programme and the philosophy of the

school. A timetable is essential for the smooth running of both multigrade and monograde schools.

Benefits of a Timetable

A well-designed timetable enables learners to prepare themselves for what happens next and this preparation facilitates learning. The learners pace themselves according to the work that must be completed. The timetable should be properly structured to address the needs of the learners. The age, attention span, abilities, interests and ambitions of learners should be considered when the timetable is designed.

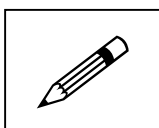
A timetable enables you, the teacher, to pace yourself. Therefore, you will use your skills and competencies more effectively. A timetable also helps you to manage your time and instructional resources like the chalkboard, learning corners or classroom space. Without a timetable, you may not complete the topics covered in the syllabus distributed by the Education Ministry.

Disadvantages of a Timetable

Some disadvantages of using a timetable are provided below:

- A timetable can be restrictive if it is not flexible.
- It can lead to compartmentalization of subjects or grades.
- Non-examinable subjects can be ignored.
- Timetabling can influence leaders to classify subjects as important and unimportant.

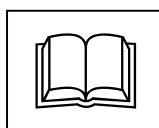
Now that you have seen why most schools have timetables and the disadvantages of these timetables, ask yourself how can one design a suitable timetable?



Self-Assessment 1

Describe a timetable and state at least five reasons why timetabling is useful for multigrade teaching.

Suggested answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Factors to Consider When Designing a Timetable

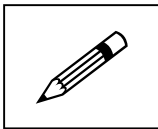
When preparing a timetable, you should pay attention to:

- The contact time you have available. Contact time is the amount of teaching time you spend with your class.
- The subjects you wish to include in the timetable and the weight you give to each subject.
- Flexibility to be incorporated in your timetable. You must allow for changing circumstances.

- The available resources, for example, space and facilities.
- The topics that you may integrate or combine.
- Subject sequencing. For example, you may do mathematics followed by art or story telling.
- Attitudes of your learners towards certain subjects and even the community's attitudes towards some subject areas such as AIDS, sex education, politics and so forth.
- Availability of public utilities. This can affect your timetable. For example, a lack of water may affect your home economics lessons.
- Duration of periods. You may want to use double or triple periods for special activities like art and craft.
- Availability of knowledgeable persons with skills to offer. For example, you may have members of your community teach sports, music, art and craft.

Preparing a timetable may be challenging, but it is worth it. You may have other factors to consider, but the above list will help you to design a very suitable timetable for your multigrade class.

Once the timetable is developed and implemented, you may need to change it to accommodate the needs of your learners and yourself. What would happen to your timetable if you became ill?



Self-Assessment 2

State at least five factors that you should consider when developing a multigrade timetable.

Suggested answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Approaches to Timetables

A multigrade teacher needs to be open to a variety of timetable approaches. Some of the timetable approaches known are the **subject staggering approach**, **common subject approach** and **subject grouping approach**. The first two approaches will be discussed in this unit.

The teacher and the school administration need to decide the kind of approach to use. Their decision will be influenced by their situation, which could be affected by resources or the number of grades a teacher must teach.

Let us discuss the approach known as **subject staggering**. If you decide to divide the morning into three subject areas, one grade could work on mathematics, another grade on science

and maybe the third on creative arts. Then your timetable may look like the example below.

Subject Staggering Approach

Time	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
09:00 – 09:30	Mathematics	Science	Language Arts
09:30 – 10:00	Mathematics	Art and Craft	Reading
10:00 – 10:30	Language Arts	Art and Craft	Science

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat, Caribbean Community Secretariat and Commonwealth of Learning. (1998: 39). *Multigrade Teaching Programme. Module 5: Timetabling and Scheduling*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

Let us say you have the above timetable. This means that all grades have to be on task according to the indicated times. The programme requires that your preparation be ready and in order. The group leaders that we mentioned earlier in this module will now prove to be very helpful to you and the class. The leaders will distribute the materials that you prepared. These materials could be worksheets, mathematics games or reading passages. The activities must include clear instructions so that the learners can follow them while you are teaching or helping one grade. For example, you could be with Grade 5 students for science at 9:00 while Grade 4 and 6 students are doing independent work in mathematics and language arts, respectively.

The following are examples of instructions that a teacher might give to the class:

Grade 4: Please do numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5 on your worksheets. Use the papers provided for the answers.

Grade 5: Please go to table 6. There are instructions for you there.

Grade 6: Please read “Thutapuo ya Padiso” on page 62 and answer questions 1 to 8 on page 64.

Common Subject Approach

The common subject approach refers to a programme whereby the multigrade teacher teaches the same subject to all grades. The learners will, however, be doing different things.

For example, during a lesson on language, the following activities may be taking place:

Grade 1: Writing patterns

Grade 3: Reading pages 1 to 2

Grade 5: Vocabulary building

This type of timetable, like the subject staggering approach, gives the teacher an opportunity to work with one group while other groups do some other activities. There is also an opportunity for the learners to help each other, as they are at different levels.

The example below shows a common subject approach.

	Monday			Tuesday		
Period	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3
1	Math	Math	Math	P.E.	P.E.	P.E.
2	Reading	Reading	Reading	Social Studies	Social Studies	Social Studies
3	Science	Science	Science	Reading	Reading	Reading
	BREAK			BREAK		
4	Music	Music	Music	Language Arts	Language Arts	Language Arts

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat, Caribbean Community Secretariat and Commonwealth of Learning. (1998: 41). *Multigrade Teaching Programme. Module 5: Timetabling and Scheduling*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

For this type of timetable, the learners would mainly be working with their textbooks or on worksheets. This usually gives the teacher a good chance to go around the room helping and guiding learners. The teacher also may use this period, while some learners are working on their own, to introduce a new concept or topic to one of the grades.

By now, you should have gathered a few ideas on the subject staggering approach and the common subject approach. But remember, practice makes perfect. You need to try working with a timetable and determine whether it is appropriate for you, your students and the subject matter.

Schedule

A schedule is an overall plan of events that is prepared by the teacher. It identifies the following:

- how the lesson will be presented
- which group the teacher will be teaching
- what the other groups will be doing.

Purposes of a Schedule

A schedule helps the teacher to manage the class and available time better. It helps the multigrade teacher to develop lessons with a variety of teaching strategies. An example of a schedule is given below. It is based on a class that is divided into three groups, but could be adapted for fewer or more groups. The chart identifies the group that the teacher is assisting.

Time	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
08:00 – 09:00	08:00 – 08:15 Reading (new vocabulary words) TEACHER	08:00 – 08:15 Word game (independent group activity)	08:00 – 08:15 Silent reading (for main ideas)
	08:15 – 08:35 Word game (independent group activity)	08:15 – 08:35 Vocabulary New words TEACHER	08:15 – 08:35 Group discussion
	08:35 – 09:00 Silent Reading	08:35 – 09:00 Word game (independent group activity)	08:35 – 09:00 Feedback from passage read TEACHER

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat, Caribbean Community Secretariat and Commonwealth of Learning. (1998: 54). *Multigrade Teaching Programme. Module 5: Timetabling and Scheduling*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

Relationship between Curriculum, Syllabus, Scheme of Work, Scheduling, Unit Plan and Lesson Plan

Key terms that you must be familiar with as you plan your academic year and daily activities were described in Module 1.

Curriculum – content of a given subject to be taught over several years.

Syllabus	– content to be taught in a given year for one subject in one grade.
Scheme of work	– total content of all subjects taught in a term.
Unit plan	– total content of a number of subjects organized over a 2- to 6-week period.
Schedule	– total content of a number of subjects for different grades spread over a day.
Lesson plan	– total activities of a given subject for a particular grade to be taught in one period.

It would be helpful if you kept the above terms and their relationships in mind when you plan your work at the beginning of the year. You need to have a global picture of the content, teaching strategies and activities you will be using for each grade.



Practice Activity

1. Identify and compare two timetable approaches.
2. Choose the timetable approach that you prefer and draw a timetable for your multigrade class.

Answers to this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Summary

In this unit, you learned that a timetable is a plan that shows how the periods within school days will be spent. There are various types of timetable, for example, subject staggered approach and common subject approach. When creating a timetable, you should consider factors such as contact time, topics that can be combined or integrate well and flexibility. You also learned about the advantages and disadvantages of using a timetable. A schedule has been introduced to you as an overall plan of events to be completed by a teacher in a day.

This unit has informed you about different ways of creating timetables and schedules for your multigrade class. The next unit will focus on the curriculum.



Reflection

Now that you have learned about timetabling and scheduling, do you think you can now draw a detailed timetable for your multigrade class? Please make a schedule for one day for your multigrade class.

Your schedule may look like the one below.

Time	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
35 minutes Common subjects	Silent independent reading from classroom library. List main ideas.	Comprehension from class text. Students work independently.	Teacher works with slow readers.
35 minutes Subject staggering	Group 1 listens to a tape recorded story from text book in language arts and responds to questions.	Group 2 uses picture as a stimulus for free writing activity.	Group 3 students work independently on mathematics.
35 minutes Common subjects and subject staggering	Continue self-study. Teacher checks work and introduces new language arts topic.	Teacher-led discussion on concepts relating to fractions with Grade 2 and 3 students. Students work on graded problems written on the chalkboard.	
BREAK		BREAK	
70 minutes Subject grouping	All students learn a local song and practise with percussion instruments.		

Source: Adapted from Commonwealth Secretariat and Caribbean Community Secretariat. (1998). *Multigrade Teaching Programme. Module 5: Timetabling and Scheduling*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

?

Unit Test

- Indicate by writing in the boxes provided whether the following statements are true or false.
 - A timetable is a plan showing how the time of each school day should be spent. ☐
 - The time you spend with the class is called contact time. ☐
 - You don't need to consider the age, attention span and abilities of your learners when drawing a timetable. ☐

d. A timetable should be flexible.

☐

e. In the common subject approach, all learners may be working on the same topic at different levels.

☐

2. Prepare a one-day schedule for three grades.

Possible answers to the unit test activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

A timetable is a plan that shows how educational resources in a school system are shared by both the teacher and the learners. This plan will provide educational opportunities and alternatives for the learners.

Below are five reasons a timetable is useful for multigrade teaching.

- It enables learners to prepare themselves for what will happen next.
- Both the teacher and the learners are able to pace themselves and thereby use their skills effectively.
- It helps teachers to manage their time and instructional resources.
- It offers an opportunity to meet learner needs.
- It enables teachers to plan lessons so that the stipulated Education Ministry syllabus is completed in the given time.

Self-Assessment 2

Factors which may be considered when designing a timetable are listed below:

- The contact time available
- Flexibility
- Subject sequencing
- Duration of periods
- Availability of resources
- The requirements listed in the syllabus
- The interests and needs of the students
- The available learning space
- The time of the year or season.

Practice Activity

1. In a **subject staggered** timetable, different grade levels work on different tasks. In a **common subject** timetable, all grade levels are being taught by the same teacher on the same subject and topic, but they are doing different tasks.

Similarities between both approaches:

- The teacher could make time to help each grade.
- In both approaches, the teacher needs thorough preparation.

An example of a subject staggered timetable is provided below.

<i>Time</i>	<i>Grade 4</i>	<i>Grade 5</i>	<i>Grade 6</i>
09:00 – 09:30	Mathematics	Science	Language Arts
09:30 – 10:00	Mathematics	Art and Craft	Reading
10:00 – 10:30	Language Arts	Art and Craft	Science

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat, Caribbean Community Secretariat and Commonwealth of Learning. (1998: 37). *Multigrade Teaching Programme. Module 5: Timetabling and Scheduling*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

2. Whichever timetabling approach you choose, your choice should work for you and your students.

Unit Test

1. Answers to the true and false statements are provided below.
 - a. T
 - b. T
 - c. F
 - d. T
 - e. T
2. Review the sample timetables provided in this unit.

UNIT 3: Multigrade Teaching and the Curriculum



Introduction

In the previous unit, you were introduced to timetabling and scheduling. This unit will cover curriculum design, characteristics of the curriculum and the development of a syllabus.

Objectives

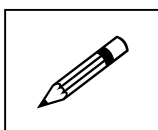
After completing this unit, you should be able to:

1. Define the terms 'curriculum' and 'syllabus'.
2. Discuss the components and characteristics of a multigrade curriculum.
3. Identify the stages in the curriculum design process.
4. Implement at least five curriculum designs in a multigrade class.

Content

This unit will cover the following topics:

- the terms 'curriculum' and 'syllabus'
- components and characteristics of a multigrade curriculum
- stages in curriculum design
- curriculum implementation
- syllabus development.



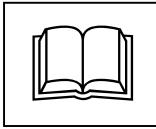
Self-Assessment 1

Construct a KWL chart similar to the example below. Fill it in with what you **Know (K)** about the curriculum, what you **Want to know (W)** about it and what you have **Learned (L)** after studying the unit.

<i>KWL Chart</i>		
<i>Know</i>	<i>Want to Know</i>	<i>Learned</i>

Source: Commonwealth Secretariat, Caribbean Community Secretariat and Commonwealth of Learning. (1998: 8). *Multigrade Teaching Programme. Module 2: Exploring Curriculum and Multigrade Teaching*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

Suggested answers for this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



What Is a Curriculum?

There are many different definitions of 'curriculum'. While you learned in Module 1 and in Unit 2 of this module that the curriculum is the content of a given subject to be taught over several years, the authors of the *Multigrade Teaching Programme, Module 2: Exploring Curriculum and Multigrade Teaching* (1998: 10) prefer the following definition:

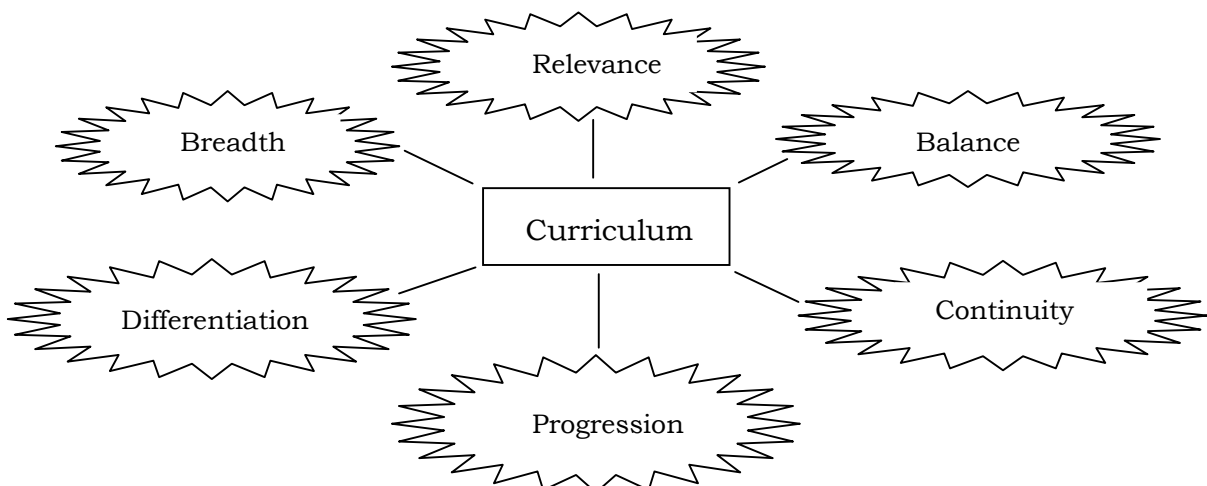
The curriculum is all the learning opportunities provided by the school. These include the formal programme as indicated in the timetable; co-curricula and out-of-school activities; and, the climate of relationships, attitudes, styles of behaviour and the general quality of life in the school.

We will use this definition of curriculum throughout the remainder of the module you are currently studying.

The curriculum should cover a range of learning activities. The teacher should not only teach about knowledge, but also about norms, values, attitudes and various skills development. In this way, the learner is developed intellectually, emotionally, socially and physically. When a curriculum is designed, there should be a deliberate effort to ensure that these aspects of learners' development are considered.

Characteristics of a Curriculum

For any curriculum to be effective and flexible, it should have the following characteristics:



Relevance. A multigrade curriculum must be relevant and take the learners' environment into account because some of the multigrade schools are in rural and remote areas. The curriculum should consider the learners' prior knowledge, culture, norms, values and attitudes. It should help them find worth and meaning in what they do at school and at home.

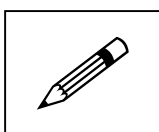
Balance. The curriculum should concentrate on the total development of the learner so that education systems can produce balanced citizens. It should incorporate non-academic activities like sport, arts and culture to develop not only knowledge but also skills, values and attitudes.

Continuity. A multigrade curriculum should aim at systematically building on the knowledge, skills and values that the learners already have. You should begin with the known and then add the unknown.

Progression. A curriculum should provide opportunities for learners to develop and strengthen their capabilities and competencies over a given period. They should be given a reasonable amount of time to apply the skills and knowledge they have acquired.

Differentiation. A multigrade curriculum should cater to a full range of abilities, strengths and weaknesses. You as a multigrade teacher should be able to match the learners' different levels with appropriate learning tasks and teaching strategies. If planned correctly in a multigrade situation, your curriculum will provide learning opportunities for all grades and all different levels and ages within a grade.

Breadth. A curriculum should prepare learners for life. It should take into account not only the content but also the skills, norms, values, attitudes, culture and unique characteristics of the local context.



Self-Assessment 2

If you were given an opportunity to plan a multigrade curriculum, which philosophy, teacher-centred or learner-centred, would you use and why?

Suggested answers for this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Curriculum Design

A multigrade curriculum should be flexible. It should give teachers options for when a particular aspect of the curriculum should be covered (probably when the learners are ready), provided that all the competencies are mastered by the learners.

Curriculum Components and Their Functions

A curriculum should have the following:

Goals:	state the overall purpose of the curriculum.
Outcomes:	state the specific competencies that the learners should be able to achieve.
Objectives:	steps that lead to the achievement of learning outcomes.
Content:	the knowledge, skills and attitudes which the learner should learn, as indicated by the learning outcomes or objectives.
Teaching strategies:	approaches or methods that will be used by the teacher to deliver knowledge and skills, as indicated in the objectives.
Assessment or evaluation strategies:	the methods used to determine if learners have mastered the knowledge and skills identified in the objectives and if the teaching strategies were effective.
Materials and resources:	all the resources required in order to deliver content, for example, teaching and learning aids, time, space and personnel.
References:	all the materials and documents that will be used to obtain information.

In writing objectives, consider the three domains of learning identified in Bloom's Taxonomy (1956):

- **cognitive:** knowledge, recall, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.
- **affective:** attitudes, values and feelings.
- **psychomotor:** physical skills.

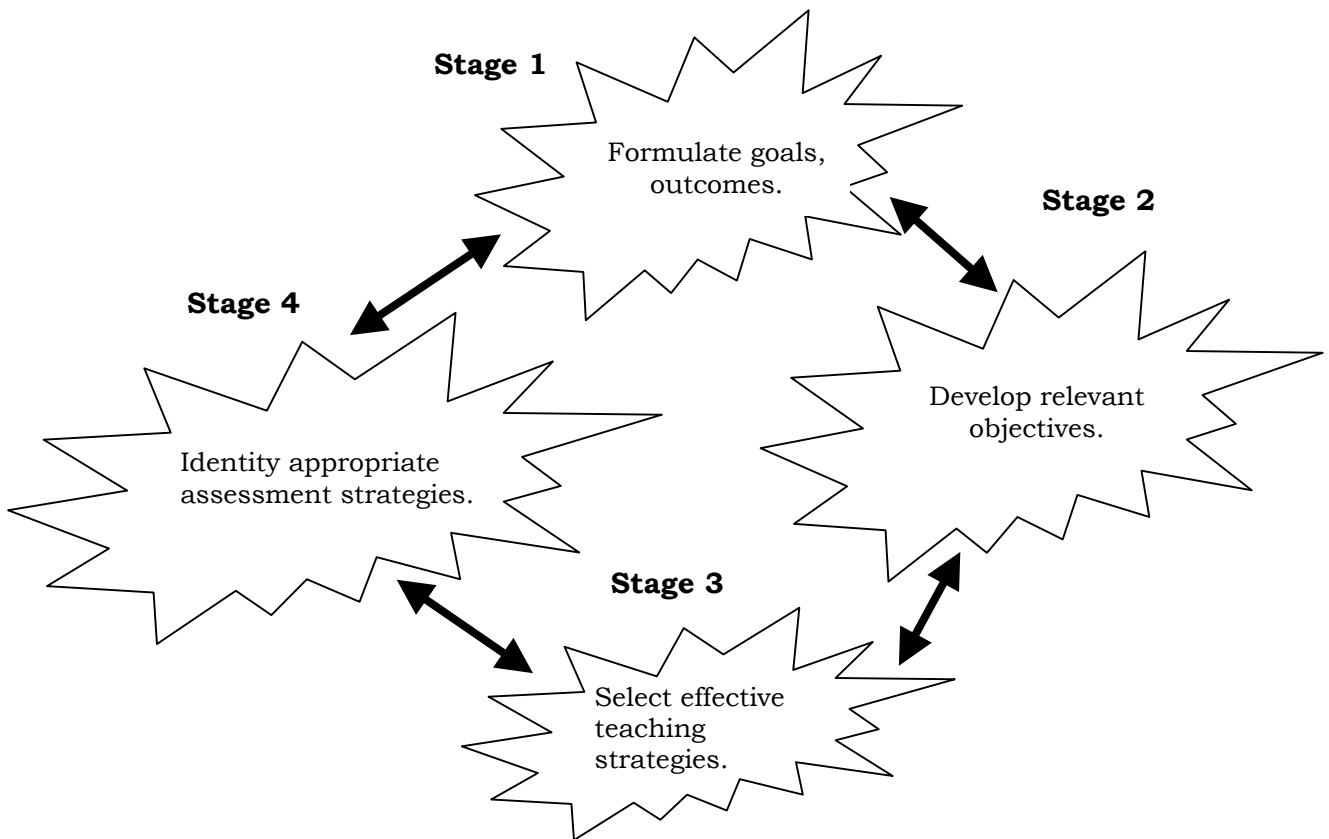
Objectives should reflect the following levels of learning:

- **knowledge, comprehension:** recalling previously learned material, understanding the meaning and restating it in your own words.
- **application:** using knowledge in concrete situations.
- **problem solving:** analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

The Curriculum Design Process

The curriculum design process can start at any stage. You can combine the formulation of goals and outcomes as stage 1, the development of specific objectives as stage 2, the selection of

teaching strategies as stage 3 and the identification of assessment strategies as stage 4.



Source: Adapted from Commonwealth Secretariat, Caribbean Community Secretariat and Commonwealth of Learning. (1998: 28). *Multigrade Teaching Programme. Module 2: Exploring Curriculum and Multigrade Teaching*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

Curriculum Designs

You will be introduced to five curriculum designs that you can use in your multigrade class. These designs are:

- spiral approach,
- expanding horizons approach,
- infusion approach,
- integrated approach, and
- modular approach.

A spiral approach refers to a curriculum in which you continue to return to a central topic or theme and develop the theme further each time you revisit it. Information is organised from the known to the unknown, from simple to complex. For example, if you look at the theme 'water' in Grade 1, when you teach Grade 2, you will build on the previous year's work and provide learners with a more in-depth study of the same theme.

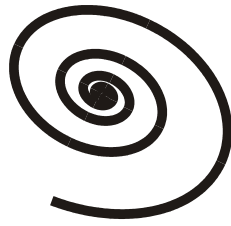
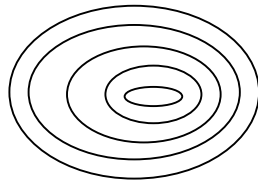


Illustration of spiral curriculum

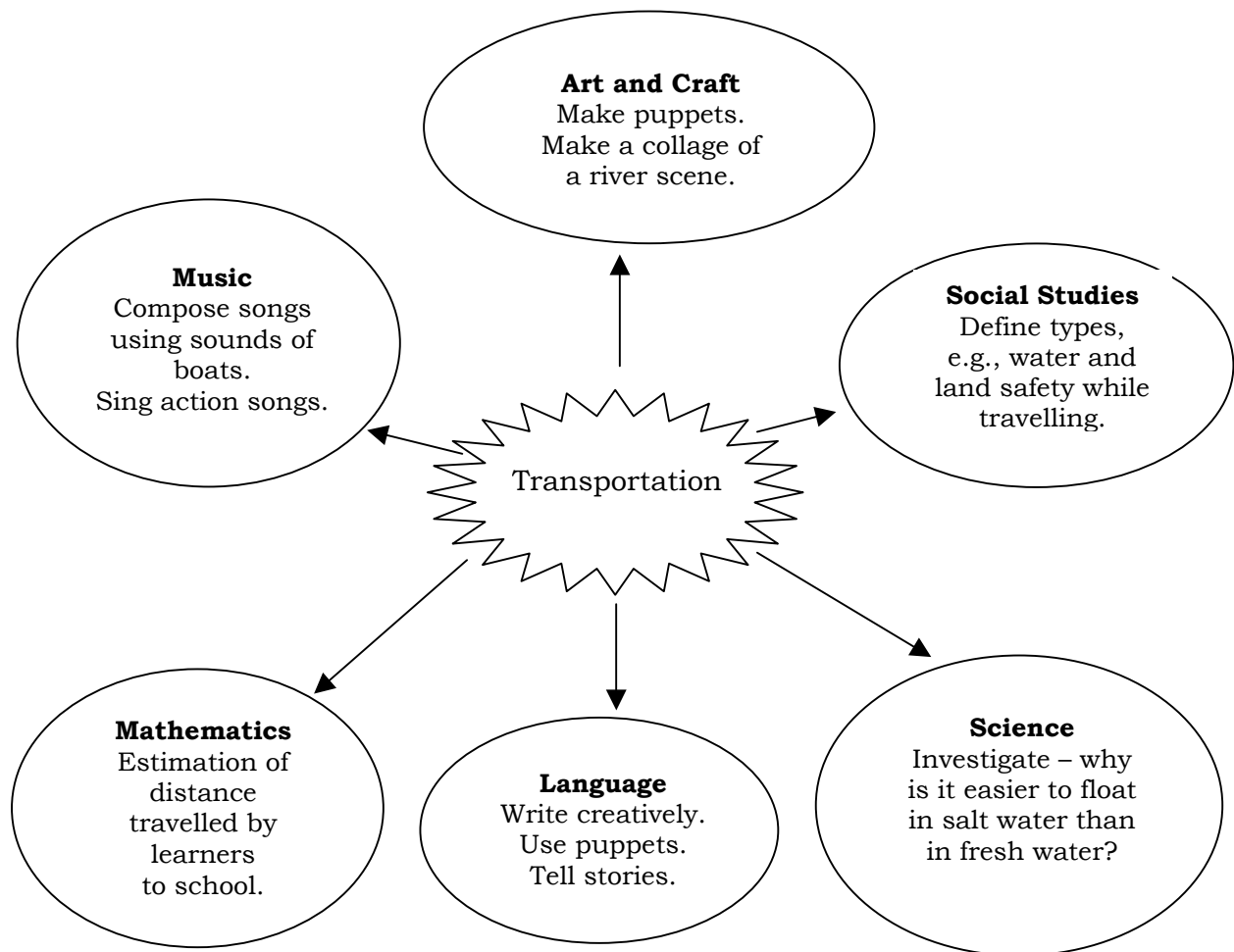
An expanding horizons approach develops by starting with concepts that are familiar to the learner, for example, his or her family. From there, you expand the focus to the community, country and to the world. It also develops from the known to the unknown.



Expanding horizons curriculum

An infusion approach occurs when you teach a particular subject in other subject areas. You can introduce your learners to the meanings and spelling of terms such as photosynthesis and chlorophyll in a science lesson. Consequently, language arts is being taught in a science lesson.

An integrated approach happens when you put concepts and skills from different subjects together. This approach could work very easily in a multigrade class. You could ask your learners to work on a project with the theme being 'transportation'. The illustration below shows the various activities that could be conducted.



A modular approach is a curriculum that is made up of a series of modules. This approach allows learners to proceed at their own pace. For example, if a group of slow learners is busy with Module 2, the faster learners can proceed to Module 3.



Practice Activity

Use the theme 'water' to work out integrated activities for the different levels in your multigrade class.

Suggested answers for this activity are provided at the end of this unit.



Syllabus Development

Before you develop a syllabus, you should know your school's curriculum, which should contain the whole programme of the school. In order to develop a syllabus, you should consider following the steps below.

- **Develop a portrait.** A portrait is the total visual picture of a year's work. Review the subject objectives in the curriculum. Make sure that the learning materials are relevant and consider the interests of the learners.

- **Identify the titles of the units.** Group all your topics into units. Determine the specific units which you will use to cover the topics in a portrait. Review available learning materials for ideas.
- **Determine the sequence of units.** Decide on the order of units by considering content difficulty. Move from easy content to difficult content. Also consider sequencing according to the order of the timing of events—what must be learned first?
- **Allocate time to each unit.** Determine the total time available to cover all units over the year. Determine the amount of teaching time that you can allocate for each unit.



Summary

In this unit, you were exposed to the process of designing a curriculum and developing a syllabus.

The following curriculum designs were discussed:

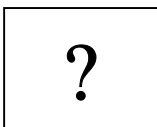
- the spiral and expanding horizon approaches
- the infusion and integrated approaches
- the modular approach

Finally, you were provided with a series of steps that could help you develop a syllabus.



Reflection

What did you accomplish in this unit? Do you think you are ready to design a multigrade curriculum?



Unit Test

1. According to the definition provided in this unit, what is the difference between a curriculum and a syllabus?
2. Name five curriculum design approaches.
3. Describe the components of a curriculum.

Suggested answers to this test are provided at the end of this unit.



Suggested Answers

Self-Assessment 1

You could have answered this question like this:

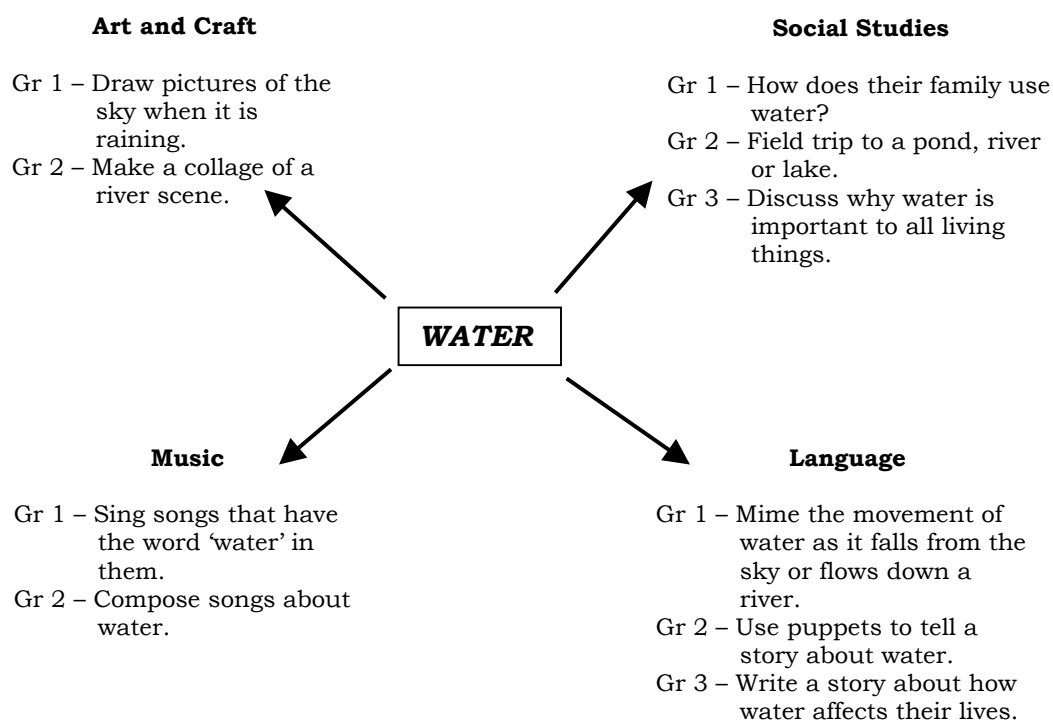
<i>KWL Chart</i>		
<i>Know</i>	<i>Want to Know</i>	<i>Learned</i>
A curriculum is a plan that can include goals, methods, activities, materials and assessment.	Are there different kinds of curriculum? Who decides what should be included in the curriculum? How can I cover the vast amount of materials recommended by various curriculum designers?	There is no correct answer for this column, as it depends entirely on what you have learned. You should be aware that there are several definitions of 'curriculum'. The term was defined in Module 1 and Unit 2 of this module as the content of a subject to be taught over several years. It was defined in this unit as all the learning activities provided by a school.

Self-Assessment 2

Your answer will depend on the philosophy you choose. However, keep in mind that we teach for our learners, not ourselves. Our goal is to help students learn. Therefore, we must always keep in mind their needs and interests. Then we facilitate their intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth.

Practice Activity

You could have structured your theme in the following way.



Unit Test

1. According to the definition provided in this unit, a curriculum is the total programme of the school, while the syllabus is the content of a particular subject.
2. Below are five curriculum design approaches.
 - spiral approach
 - expanding horizons approach
 - infusion approach
 - integrated approach
 - modular approach.
3. The major components of a curriculum are described below.
 - **Goals** state the overall purpose of the curriculum.
 - **Objectives** state how the learners can achieve specific learning outcomes.
 - The **content** indicates the subject matter to be studied.
 - **Teaching strategies** indicate the methods to be used to deliver the content.
 - **Assessment strategies** indicate methods that can be used to determine if learners have mastered the content.
 - **Materials** and **resources** are the teaching and learning aids that are required to deliver the content.
 - **References** are the sources you will use to obtain information.